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What is the meaning and purpose of saying grace before a meal?

Question: "What is the meaning and purpose of saying grace before a meal?"

Answer: "Saying grace" refers to the practice of thanking God for the food before a meal. It is also called "saying the blessing." Such prayers follow the examples of Jesus and the apostle Paul, both of whom "said grace" before meals (see [Acts 27:35](#)).

Matthew records two instances of Jesus feeding thousands of people with only a small amount of food ([Matthew 14:15-21](#); [15:32-38](#)). In both these accounts, before Jesus "broke the bread" (started the meal), He gave thanks to God for it (14:19).

Apparently, giving thanks before a meal was Jesus' customary practice. In [Luke 24:13-35](#), on the day of Jesus' resurrection, two of His followers travel to the village of Emmaus. Jesus joins them on the road, but they are "kept from recognizing him" (v. 16). Once they arrive at Emmaus, Jesus stops to eat with them. At the table, Jesus "took bread, gave thanks, broke

it and began to give it to them” (v. 30). Immediately, the disciples recognize Him; it was “when he broke the bread” (v. 35) and gave thanks that their eyes were opened.

Since we owe everything we have to God’s grace, the “free and unmerited favor of God,” it is appropriate to thank Him always ([Ephesians 5:20](#)). Meals provide a good time to pause and do just that. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” ([Romans 11:36](#)).

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution by R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

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